



Traffic Services Section Michigan State Police Field Update #1

Providing Traffic Related Information and Services to Michigan Law Enforcement

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Introduction

This publication is the first of a series intended to provide information to the law enforcement community on current topics relating to traffic safety and traffic enforcement. Each update may address questions from the field received by the Traffic Services Section, or may contain information on equipment, legislation, training, and enforcement efforts. Additional information can be obtained at the Traffic Services Section [webpage](#), or by contacting a specific unit directly at the numbers below. If viewing an electronic version, use the links to visit the various websites or send questions by e-mail.

School Bus Hazard Light Stops

[MCL 257.1855](#) allows for the use of hazard lights instead of flashing overhead red lights under certain conditions when pupils are not required to cross the road, and traffic is able to legally flow around the bus to the left. [Additional information](#) and a [slideshow](#) explaining the circumstances under which this type of stop can be used are available on the website.

Safety Belts and Child Restraints

Based on the number of calls received by the section, there seems to be a great deal of confusion among the general public over the issue of who is required to wear safety belts, and at what age (height, weight, etc.) a child can switch to a safety belt instead of a child restraint system. This confusion has been compounded by the publication of a card entitled "Michigan's Safety Belt Law Enforcement Guide." The original undated version of the card could be interpreted to imply that exemptions existed for several types of vehicles that were not exempted, specifically trucks over 10,000 pounds and taxi cabs. These cards, intended solely for law enforcement use in making a determination to stop a vehicle based on visible non-use of a shoulder belt, have found their way into the hands of truck drivers and taxi drivers who occasionally use them when challenging tickets. The [2002 revision](#) reformatted the information, allowing for appropriate interpretation.

[MCL 257.710d](#) requires that all children under age 4 must be properly secured in an approved child restraint system. There are no height and weight restrictions in the law, but manufacturers have height and weight limitations in place for the various systems. [MCL 257.710e](#) requires that all drivers, front seat passengers, and rear passengers "4 years of age or more but less than 16 years of age" must wear a properly adjusted and fastened safety belt. There are limited exemptions to each of the laws. The terms "properly secured," "properly adjusted and fastened," and "approved child restraint system" mean that the restraint system or belt must be used as specified by the manufacturer, as tested to meet the Federal Motor Vehicles Safety Standards.

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